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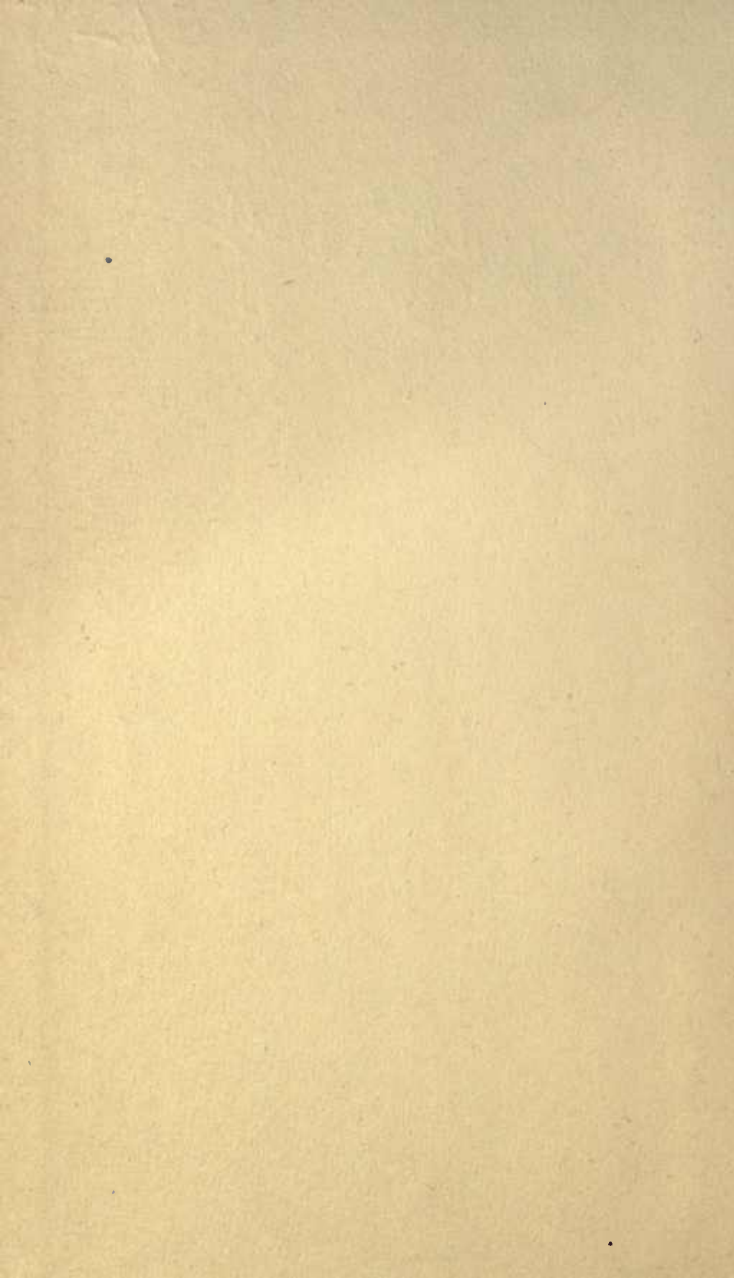


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*Songs
of the
South Shore
by
Martha Prouty*

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Kathleen Wesley



SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

BY
MARTHA PROUTY



BOSTON
MARSHALL JONES COMPANY
1922

O. Swann
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SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

NATURAL THINGS

OH, happy, dancing, gold-brown brook,
They ought to bind you in a book,
They who in search of something new,
The lovely natural things eschew;
You do not seem a bit forlorn,
While faring forth from dawn to dawn,
But just so simply, gladly gay,
That it must be the natural way,
And that great truth that you will be,
Some day enveloped in the sea,
Is just the truth, and being so,
Does not disturb your even flow.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

HURT

ONCE I saw a lovely smile
Start, then hesitate awhile,
And a bruised thought crept apart,
Sorrowing in someone's heart.
It was such a tender thing,
To be sorrowing.

Once I heard a bright laugh break
On its fairest note, and take
Sudden flight—away—away
To the farthest haunts of day.
It was much too sweet a thing
For lone wandering.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

FELLOWMEN

THERE are so many natural things,
To lift the heart on bluebird's wings,
Why must those tired feet stumble so,
Along the way they have to go?

'Tis so much easier for two
Fellowmen to dare and do,
Ah, speed the day they'll understand,
How good it is to lend a hand.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

LITTLE DANCING FEET

HER pretty little dancing feet

Set out to meet

A comely youth.

Dance on, oh slender, wayward feet, dance on, on,
on.

When youth is comely, ah la la!

The little dancing feet go far

Ere they come home, to shelter sweet, so safe and
sweet.

But comely youth is often false,

Tires of the valse.

His fancy caught

By newer charms, he goes away, quite like a stranger
goes away.

Then little dancing feet turn back

Drag heavily along, alack!

To home and those, whose love is balm, to salve the
hurt.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE.

LILACS

THE stranger from far, dim cities,
When he shall make the hill,
May stop where the lilacs blossom,
And take of their sweets at will;
For the Gardner planted the lilacs,
Where the humble home might be,
And the hedgerows grew and flourished,
From only a single tree;
He knew that some weary traveller,
Would gain new strength to go on,
With the fragrant gift of the lilacs,
Reaching from dawn to dawn.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A CIRCLE OF UGLY RED

WE all woke up in the dark
That is densest before the dawn,
And Dad built a roaring fire,
And Ma put the kettle on,
And we had a little snack, ere the night should be
quite gone.

The moon showed a strange half face,
Circled with ugly red,
When Dad went off to work
And we went back to bed,
And we thanked the Lord for a shelter, safe and
snug and warm,
For Dad, when he saw that circle, had prophesied
a storm.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

SISTER OF MINE

MY sister lives in the throbbing town,
In a palace of granite and marble,
And I live down at the edge of the sea,
 In a fisher's cot,
 That is just a blot,
Against the blur of the lea.

My sister does not know my name,
Nor the cares of my lowly station,
For I live down at the edge of the lea,
 Where the sea gull whirs,
 And the rose-blow stirs,
Rose-red in the heart of me.

My sister is not of my kindred,
Nor of my race nor creed,
And yet she is sister of mine I claim,
 If the rose-blow stirs,
 In that heart of hers,
And bursts into rose-red flame.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

PATH OF PINES

MY lady's like the mayflower,
In dear elusiveness,
I try to catch her, but she hides,
In fine exclusiveness.

My lady seeks her bower,
In soft, shy blush confused,
I dare not seek an audience,
For fear I'll be refused.

But ah, my lady's mood doth change,
And she fares forth to meet
Her true love, down the path of pines,
Ah, how my lady's sweet.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A DREAM THAT IS SWEET

(A Song)

THE breeze that steals up
From the blossom-sweet South,
Cannot find me a flower
As sweet as your mouth.

The clouds that drift down
From the cold northern skies,
Say there's never a star
That's as bright as your eyes.

The sunbeams have played
In your curls all day long,
And the birds in the treetops
Have taught you their song.

Now twilight has found me
A dream in the West,
A dream that is sweet
For my baby at rest.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

CALICO GOWN

I MADE a trip to Boston Town,
To buy some calico,
With which to make a pretty gown,
In which to catch a beau.

They showed me yards and yards of stuff,
All bright and gay and new,
It seemed they'd never cry enuff,
Of rose and green and blue.

They brought out quiet, staple kinds,
Plain stuff, yet good to wear,
And I was moved to many minds,
And lost my senses fair.

Oh, just to make a sweet print gown,
The cotton plants must grow,
And many mills in teeming towns,
Spin yards of calico.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE FINGER BOWL

THERE at the dinner on Beacon Hill,
They ate and drank and talked their fill;
There sat I, the stranger guest,
Dressed quite carefully in my best,
And heard them settle beyond a doubt,
The things I had troubled my Maker about,
Then in a daze, through the scented haze,
I watched the dip, in the finger bowl
Of a finger-tip.

After the thing was over and done,
I wondered why it was ever begun,
A wonder shared by such simple souls,
As scoff at the mission of finger bowls.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE BLUE JAR

MANY an hour and oft
When the lights are low and the notes fall soft
On the waiting air
And a fragrance rises from over there
Where the roses are
In my dear blue jar
I wish that the friend who gave it to me
Might share one hour of harmony.

Beauty is mine to give
While music and roses and friendship live
And hours are mine to share
With my friends, and rare
As fleeting fragrance is this
Dear thought of hours we miss
Gathered each one as the roses are
And put away in my dear blue jar.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

TO A PEDDLER OF VIOLETS

A FLOWER is very lovely,
If refuse heap beside,
Or cherished in glass houses,
Just to deck a bride.

A flower is like a promise,
And its fulfilment too,
'Tis perfume, form and coloring,
Olden dreams and new.

A flower gives very freely,
In friendly sojourn here,
Ho, peddler of violets,
Mind if I stand near!

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE FORFEIT

I WISH that the ways of Charity,
Knew never limit nor bound,
But did run the gamut of wisdom,
Each time the sun went round.

I wish it would tend the garden,
In the heart of every child,
And lend a fairer phrasing,
To tongues that are running wild.

I wish it would lay its mantle,
On weakness, sin and shame,
And only fix a forfeit,
Where Christ would fix the blame.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

DEAR HOUSE

ONCE I stayed and rested me for a little while,
Within the walls of Dear House, and felt its gentle
guile,

Steal away my senses, and leave me in a daze,
So that I looked dreamily, through a golden haze.

Box trees ancient and wonderfully gnarled,
Reared themselves in front of it and at the stranger
snarled,

Princess elms beside it, swayed and beckoned him,
Who lured by some loveliness, dared its portals dim.

It was reared by mortal hands, according to a
plan,

But somewhat lurked around it, of danger to the
man,

Who swearing by the rule and rote, o'erlooked the
subtle spell,

That with the shades of evening, across that Dear
House fell.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

Down the stairway's splendor, through the hallway's
dusk,
Came the sound of tripping feet, lavender and musk,
Wail of flute and violin, tinkling laughter too,
'Till, half fearing such dear ghosts, scarce a breath
I drew.

All around that Dear House, the chorus of the
flowers,
Chants from rose to violet, the hymnal of the hours,
Weaving out of golden haze, charm for those who
roam,
Seeking Dear House that each heart somehow knows
is home.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

HALF FORGOTTEN THINGS

OLD ways that wind through a village street,
Stopping awhile, a half forgotten friend to greet,
Lead straight to the step of a homely door,
Then linger, satisfied to seek no more.

Old haunts that cry for someone lost,
Seem meant, when once the half forgotten trail is
crossed,
To yield a welcome that is sweet as Spring,
And then a peace beyond all measure bring.

Old joys that laugh and dance and woo,
Though half forgotten, thrill our hearts anew,
Chide us, bless us, comfort us, then creep
Smiling through tears, back to the Past, to sleep.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

BLOSSOMTIME

CHERRY blossoms bud and blow,
Blossoms born of sun and snow,
 You know, I know,
How soon the springtimes go,
 Heigho, heigho!

Apple blossoms pink and white,
Birds' nest and bees' delight,
 Daylight, noon bright,
Springtimes rest awhile in flight,
 Sunlight, then night.

Peach blossoms petaled pink,
Flower and fruit and fancy link,
 Bobo-link, bobo-link,
Singing near the river's brink,
 Do you ever stop and think?

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A VAGRANT PASSING FAIR

DAY is upon your threshold,
There are roses in her cheeks,
And her gown is gray brocaded,
Where the sun gold tossed its streaks.

Her hair is the brown of seaweeds,
Her throat is bound with pearls,
And strings of jewels silver-set,
She has wound among her curls.

She waked and dressed her early,
While the stars were in the skies,
And still the tender dream of them,
Is lurking in her eyes.

She's a merry, roving maiden,
Blithesome and passing fair,
The flitting shadows your fancy sees,
Are cast by her sea-brown hair.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

If life is only a fleeting while,
And love is often a jest,
And folly gambles with lingering lips,
Night comes, and we go to rest.

She's only a vagrant passing fair,
And love maybe is a jest,
But her throat is bare of her milky pearls,
When she wanders into the west.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE HONEYSUCKLE

DEAR vine, luxuriant living
Proof of renewal,
Fair greenery multiple leaved
All a-shimmer
Of jade and slim silver,
All a-quiver
When wind lips discover
And claim you
And murmur endearments;
Serene on the surface,
Yet tempest heart bursting
In orange and crimson
Trumpet shaped blossoms
That trumpet the truth.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

SUMMER

A TRUCE to tears, laugh and be gay,
The rose-sprigged muslin that you wore in May,
Was thrown into the rag bag yesterday
The peddler smiled who carried it away.

A truce to sighs, laugh and be glad,
Those days in June when revelry went mad,
You danced night long nor found the morrow sad,
Because the piper was a likely lad.

A truce to fears, laugh and forget,
Through July dusks of rose and violet,
When golden dreams by olden dreams are met,
In firefly flash, there's nothing to regret.

A truce to time, laugh and live long,
The scent of poppies lulls at evensong,
To love's sweet hush, and August nights prolong
Such dreams as to one summer's sun belong.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

GOOD FOLKS

WE haven't any great folks in our town,
Somehow they seem to shun its avenues,
Elm-shaded walks, playground of little ones,
But we've a few good folks we'd hate to lose.

We know that we can help, if we're not great,
That fame and fortune does not measure us,
That somewhere deep within we cherish things
That happen, without making any fuss.

We know a few who do not seek for fame,
But keep right on just doing what they can,
They work and sing, and children love them well,
And it is good to be that kind of man.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A PEARL

I TOOK a milky pearl without a fleck,
And gave it to my love to wear,
She placed it 'gainst her rosy neck,
Since when each seems more fair.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

STRAIGHT AWAY

STRAIGHT away, straight away, now 'tis edge
of the morning,

Bright sunset is presaged quite oft by gray dawning,
As smiles follow tears and as sun follows rain,—
Who earliest starts meets the turn in the lane.

Straight away, straight away, to the top of the
morning,

Fling greeting as bright in the face of the warning,
As sunshine that opens the heart of a rose,—
Who happiest answers tells least that he knows.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

MY SHIP IS COMING IN

I COULDN'T ask him not to go,
Because of the look he had, of seeing me
And yet not seeing *me* at all, but something
Oh infinitely finer, and so
Now I'm waiting—just that—as women do,
For my ship to come in.

There was a time when that man of mine,
Walked close beside me along the avenue,
And we watched motors and people streaming past,
And he'd pick out a car, and ask me
How I liked it—because—you see we knew
Our ship was coming in.

We saw *you*, when someone helped you out
Before that wonderful shop, and you selected
Upholstery for your newest car, to match your eyes,
Your rings sparkled so, those salesmen fluttered
about
And that man of mine—just smiled—he knew I knew
Our ship was coming in.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

Just now there's dawn, noon, setting sun,
Days meaningful with beauty and opportunity, of
course,
And I must watch ebb tide sucking the seaweed,
Out and under, out and away, 'til the day is done,
Another marked off—one more—I'm marking time,
'Til my ship comes in.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE FORTUNE TELLER

HER somnolent, sunken topaz eyes,
By one indifferent glance apprise,
Your worth of body, heart and mind,
Likewise your standing with your kind.

She shrugs her shoulders and smiles at length,
Matching her wit against your strength,
And a light that is part of the puzzle, breaks
Her sombre gaze as she lays her stakes.

Your household goods and perhaps your land,
She sees them all as you cross her hand,
With a silver piece, and methinks your heart
Is likewise bared by her subtle art.

From her guarded, graven, sentient lips,
The prophecy like honey drips,
Slow words and sweet as some caress
Forborne, but desired none the less.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

She shrugs her shoulders and smiles at length,
Matching her art against your strength,
And to meet the glow in her topaz eyes,
Has leaped a flame that forgives her lies.

Ah why, and why, did you let her come
To get your heart beneath her thumb,
For you may forbear, but desire no less,
From sentient lips one slow caress.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE BALLET

A CLOUD of crimson, a flash of gold,
A single step in a dance of old,
The viols wail as the gods lament,
But a mortal loves what the gods have lent.

A violet scarf and a silver gleam,
A single step in an olden dream,
The flute trills sweet of Olympian days,
Ere the gods' own darlings forsook their ways.

An amber ripple, a glimpse of jade,
A single step and the spell is laid,
Orchestral rapture and motion meet
In a dance of old that is all too fleet.

A flood of light and the rainbow fades,
They have fled afar to Olympian glades,
A peal of laughter—the gods rejoice,
But a mortal craves what the gods hold choice.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE SOUTH WIND

THIS stupid worm the world styles me,
Was once a butterfly or bee,
Or bird, and had a pair of wings,
Else tales are lies the south wind brings.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

SLOW WORDS

AS butterflies and birds a-wing,
So light words and fair words, unenduring,
Have touched my days and changed them not,
From idleness with errant fancy fraught.

As garden bloom and breath of pine,
So slow words and sweet words, with thought
a-twine,
Have come, and I'll suggest they stay,
My honored guests, throughout this perfect day.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE SPARROW

SOMETHING stirred at my feet in the dust,
And a dust-gray thing that surely must
Have a sparrow been, with a soft rush flew,
Fright-winged and fleet-winged into the blue,
A soul akin to the vibrant things,
Quickened from dull gray dust—with wings.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

BIRTHDAY

SURELY the day that I was born,
Good fairies came this earth upon,
And one made ready gardens fair,
Tulips and daffies planted there,
And sowed a lot of little seeds,
To blossom forth to meet my needs,
Sweet of the rose and hawthorne's strength,
And poppies for my dreams at length,
And many, many, many more,
Flowers have blossomed 'round my door.

One fairy hewed my forward path,
With that strange power a fairy hath,
Through valley's peaceful, pleasant green,
And deep wood full of things unseen,
Up, up the hill whose lofty crest,
Would seem at last to end the quest,
And down again and round about,
No one could guess where we'd come out,
But somehow just as twilight fell,
We reached my home and all was well.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

MINE OWN

WE sit by our fireside,
Mine own love and I,
While the rush of the mad world,
By thousands goes by.

And ah, we've not envy,
For station nor wealth,
While we have each other,
And both have good health.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A LASSIE OH

THERE'S a bit of a brogue
In the speech of me mother,
And him with the blackthorn
Is me own sweet brother.

'Tis true we're from Erin,
And for her 'til death!
Quit, Michael, you squeeze so,
I can't get me breath.

There's a bit of the brogue,
On me own tongue, I'm sayin',
To match that boy's blarney,
Who wants to go Mayin'.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE MISER

THE miser counts and counts and counts,
Yet takes no count of time,
Ten decades may a century make,
Ten pennies make a dime.

There's lavish gold on goldenrod,
On leaf and mellowed fruit,
There's garnered gold on sunset clouds,
He must some day compute.

He counts with care his yellow gold,
The total seeming fair,
But in the process he forgets,
The silver in his hair.

Against his store of hoarded gold,
He must some day compute,
Lost gold of autumn's treasures,
Of leaf and luscious fruit.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

For Nature counts and counts and counts,
Seven decades to each span,
And misers may not buy for gold,
More than another man.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

"FIVE WERE WISE"

FIVE foolish virgins forward fared,
To meet the bridegroom, unprepared,
So to those five wise virgins praise,
Who kept the sacred lights ablaze.

To be a guide along the way,
A radiant light twixt day and day,
Is all that any man can ask,
Who gives his best to daily task.

'Tis well to keep a thought in store,
To shed a light around your door,
A light that welcomes, cheers and speeds,
All mankind forward to fair deeds.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A FRIEND

GREATEST gift is this, a friend,
Who would rather give than lend;
Who to keep the flame alight,
Watches through the dreadful night;
Shields with body, heart and mind,
Frailer one from things unkind;
Bends his own desires to meet,
That dear other's fancies fleet;
Bound by neither plan nor pledge,
Holding service privilege.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

TINY TOT

SHE was such a tiny tot,
Older people quite forgot,
Left her all alone to play,
Sob awhile, then make her way
Back to God, who watchful takes
Home for healing, heart that breaks.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE MARKETPLACE

THE morning stalls are open, and the race
Is busy bartering in the marketplace.

There is such wealth of gold-spin in her hair,

Oh, but the creature's fair!

Didst ever see such texture as this skin?

Here, let him in!

This face is like a flower, a jewel, a star,

You're right she's priceless, ah!

And no man notices—Faith, the matter's slight,—

Whether within the Temple shines a light.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

YOU

WHEN things that are called Spring, come
To Earth and to you and me—
I mean things like the flush on the cheek of a girl,
And the flame in the heart of a man—
And the running stream of that which we call Life,
Beats mile upon mile, redly
Against our pulses and across our days,
The warmth and the colour of my blood means
You—
Or someone very much like You.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

INTO THE WEST

OH lover, lover divine,
You rode into the west—
And night came—and the rest
Was a dream—and the dream was mine.

Oh lover, lover of mine,
In the west you were lost—
And the trail—and the cost
Was a life—and the life was thine.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A FISHER SONG

THE tide is on the ebb, on the ebb,
And o'er the waves the fisher's web,
Sweeps out to catch the shining store,
That in a fisher's mystic lore,
Spells Fortune fair through the livelong day,
So draw them in, pull away, pull away.

The net is wet and the pull is long,
And the fisher sings some sea dog's song,
The lean brown arms are straining hard,
But a fisher is always another's pard,
While they watch for the silvery, sodden prey,
And sing while they work, pull away, pull away.

The catch is good and the fisher glad,
For the news is good for the wife and lad,
And home is good when the night doth fall,
So he sends o'er the waves a tender call,
As they dip their oars in the kindly spray,
And again with a will pull away, pull away.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

I WAS A CAPTAIN

WHEN every inch of this big world,
Was crowded full of fun,
And all the days seemed bound to end,
When they were half begun,
I was the captain of a raft,
A nifty, shifty pirate craft,
And then I ordered things the way,
I'd like to order them today.

Through meadow wilds and willow shade,
A lazy, loafing brook,
Adventured with us day by day,
While cowslips bent to look;
At last the glint of gold I spied,
And recklessly my fortune tried,
But only found the mystery,
That every day still beckons me.

If powerful genii should appear,
And promise in good faith,
To give me once my heart's desire,

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

I would not choose a wraith,
Like that which dwells in glint of gold,
But I would be a captain bold,
And order things to be the same,
As when I played that dear old game.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

SIMPLICITY

A SIMPLE thing, this world of ours,—
Sweet blossoms at our birth, then funeral flowers;
And that this Garden differs some from Hell,
Is owing to the Spring that feeds the Well.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A CLOWN

LIFE came by on a silver night,
Offered a banquet of rare delight,
Fed me up, and then let me down,
Left me alone, to play the clown.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

TEARS ARE BUT PETALS

(*A Song*)

THE dawn shall be fair when the sun sets red,
A rose shall bloom and at night lie dead,
And lips shall be sweet though a heart has bled,
For tears are but petals some rose has shed.

He gave you a rose and you smiled, ah me,
But your eyes held tears that he could not see,
For lips that are kissed are the sunset's red,
And the new dawn glows ere its light has sped.

The dawn shall be fair when the sun sets red,
And lips shall be sweet though a heart has bled,
But love 'neath the roses must bury its dead,
For tears are but petals some rose has shed.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

BELOVED I HAVE COME

BELOVED, I have come to you here,
In the wayside house abiding a little,
I mingle wistaria's purple,
Mourning a trifle,
With white clematis bridal,
Hushing the choral—

Beloved, the earth is so gracious,
I gain but a step, forgive if I linger,
I weave garlands of myrtle,
Adorning my kirtle,
Lest when I come I am pale,
Seeming sorrowful—

Beloved, I shall go hence with you,
Whither you lead and abide with you ever,
My bearing imperial,
Wearing the purple,
My secret heart humble,
Gaining the temple.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

IF I WERE A GHOST

I 'D wrap myself in robes of white, if I were a
ghost,
And trailing noiselessly through the gloom,
I'd sit me down in some well loved room,
And let my fingers idly stray,
Over the keys in a melody gay,
Then someone would wake in the throbbing night,
and hear a ghost.

I'd deck myself with lilies white, if I were a ghost,
And trailing idly the meadows through,
I'd brighten my garlands with blossoms blue,
Forget-me-nots are the flowers I'd wear,
With some sweet white lilies in my hair,
Then someone hurrying through the night,
would see a ghost.

I'd always appear when the heavens were bright, if I
were a ghost,
And trailing my garlanded garments white,
I'd stand quite still in the pale moonlight,

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

That all who came should look on me,
And wonder how I could really be,
So fragrant and fair, and yet fade away,
 just like a ghost.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

ASHES AGLOW

THERE are ashes aglow on the hearth,
The hearth in the house where all comers,
Take cheer, and return to the path,
But where goes the glow, does it follow?

There are ashes dust-dead in the urn,
The urn in the house where all comers,
Find welcome and never return,
But what of the Word, was it hollow?

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

FAITH

I HAVE gone far,
Gone far and lost my way,
Passed stumbling through the perils of long nights,
And watched with eager eyes for each new day;
Forgetful ever that the darkness comes
Again and yet again, my feet have pressed
Faster and further, miles and miles along
Whatever road seemed fair to end my quest;
And always I have found myself bereft
When day has drawn to bitter close at last,
Of something fine, my faith in friends perhaps,
Or dear belief in love, yet holding fast,
As Eros to his bow, to faith in God;
And as the one armed with the better strength,
Secures the fairest prize in life or love,
I shall go on and meet my own at length.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE REQUIEM OF THE WINDS

THE winds at will, blow keen and shrill,
Rest, wounded heart of mine!
The plaint they make mayhap shall slake,
Such pain as thine.

The winds aloft moan dull and soft,
Rest, weary heart, oh rest!
Their sobbing plea is made for thee,
Thine is their quest.

The winds now weep, both loud and deep,
Oh rest, worn heart, rest here!
The tears they shed are for the dead,
Rest in thy bier.

The winds croon there, against your hair,
Sleep, happy heart, sleep on!
They will caress and soothe and bless,
And wake you in the morn.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

SELFHOOD

I AM thankful to you for many things, Oh Lord!
God of hosts
Of material things and invisible things,
Gold marriage bands and gray smoke rings,
Each is of you as well as the other,
As a man may perhaps have a beast for a brother.

I bow and abase myself at your altars, O Lord!
God of hosts
Of invincible things and perishable things,
The heart that thrills and the voice that sings,
Each has the faith and can make the plea,
And look for an answer—all but me.

I know that you wrought me of miracles, O Lord!
God of hosts
Of adorable things and incredible things,
The lips that bless and the lash that stings,
Each must look for reward to Thee,
But the greatest—the Self—you gave to me.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

EARTH PLAYS ITS PART

MAN in the earth with pick and shovel works
at pleasure,
Of his brother man who mines the earth
for golden treasure,
And after certain time, a measured space,
Within the earth, marks their last resting place.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

RHYMING THE DAYS

LET'S rhyme the days as we paddle along,
Setting each stroke of the paddle to song,
One verse for me and another for you,
No man may paddle another's canoe.

Courses must change with the wind and the wave,
One song be gay and the next one be grave,
One day may rhyme with the sunshine and flowers,
Next day be set to the rhythm of showers.

One day is dreary and windy and cold,
Strokes must be certain and songs must be bold,
Then we must rhyme all the hours with win,
Thus rounding out every task we begin.

Rhyming the days as we paddle along,
Setting each stroke of the paddle to song,
Speeding each hour with a thought of its own,
We'll never guess where the hours have flown.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE DOWER

LOVE, so 'tis said, brings blindness for a dower,
But blindness doth possess the wondrous power
Of quickening every sense to sight divine,
So, Love, we ask no greater dower than thine.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

LOVE'S POWER

THE sky glooms o'er and the cool rain falls,
But aftertime the glad sun glows,
And out of the depth of its passion calls
Forth to its fullest bloom, a rose.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

DAWN

THE pagan, Night, drew rein beside the couch of
Dawn,

While that fair maid wrapped in her raiment sweet,
Raised her round arms in frank, indifferent yawn,
Scorning the while his burning gaze to meet.

“What is it that your Highness bids?” she asked,
And mocked him fairly, for she knew her power,
To tease him ’til his deepest plots unmasked,
Were hers to traffic ’til the sunrise hour.

“I’d have you leave the world awhile to me,
As in good time it must,” he frowning said,
“Become my subject, earth and air and sea,
Leaving no place where you may rest your head.

If you will come to me without the use of force,
But as a precious gift your love I’ll cherish,
If you will come to me without the use of force,
But by the gods, whoever else you love shall perish!

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

"Just now I left a gang of sleepy tipsters there,"
Pointing to where the city lights shone dim,
"And in the arms of one she loved, a maiden fair,
Prayed that she might live a life of nights with
him,

"All those who revel want the night for that,
And those who work, work best where light is not;
Just now Man hobnobs with the owl and bat,
For all big deals the candle light is sought."

"Ah, so we barter for the world?" she asked,
As though her interest were but slight at best,
"'Tis such a paltry thing, must I be tasked,
And made to argue while I still would rest?"

A tiny frown found lodgment on her brow,
That shone snow white 'neath hair of gold,
And eyes to make a monk forget his vow,
Flashed her displeasure at his conduct bold.

Gathering her garments close around her form,
She slowly rose and searched the Heavens far,
To see if by unlucky chance a storm,
Brewed in the East her victory to mar.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

Then as she swept the grasses round about,
Sweet incense scattered through the vibrant air,
Bright roseate signals swept away all doubt,
The world paid homage to a Dawn so fair.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE PRINCE IS SEEKING

THE young girl dreams apart today,
The prince is seeking everywhere,
Expectant that each moment may
Find him beside her unaware.

Her feet that halting wander on,
Through days that like her dreams are fair,
Find only this to ponder on,
The prince is seeking everywhere.

And in her face that fairer is,
Than any flower, as faith is fair,
Dwells happy thought that rarer is,
Than any honor prince may wear.

And in her eyes the lurking gleam
Of ardent promise kindles there,
A perfect likeness of the dream
The prince is seeking everywhere.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

CONTINUITY

CARRYING our burdens to and fro
We come and go, we come and go,
When sunrise signals in the east,
We go prepare the present feast,
And when its light fades in the west,
We seek our rest, we seek our rest.

If we but go a given pace,
We then may linger for a space,
And while we linger we may dream
That we are drifting down a stream,
Just drifting, in perpetual rest,
Straight to the harbor in the west.

And be the burden great or small,
Or high or low the certain call,
Whate'er the power that takes us on,
We start our journey with the dawn,
And when we need an added zest,
We think of rest, we think of rest.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

With pen and prayer book, sword and hoe,
We come and go, we come and go,
One man may pray, another fight,
Another of their doings write,
One to the soil keeping close,
May find his pleasure in a rose.

Ah well, my friends, and well 'tis well,
Whate'er it was that cast the spell,
Should never, never loose its hold,
But having made it, keep the mold,
And we go journeying ever on,
Certain that dawn will follow dawn.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

A MORSEL

WHEN we are told to give the gamble up,
Let's not hang round where other fellows sup,
Nor let our shadow fall aslant their feast,
Then we'll be great, although they count us least.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE FALLING OF THE RAIN

FROM clouds that have the greatest glories known,
Of blue much brighter than the violet's own;
Of gold to purchase all the monarchs' diadems
And thrones and crowns and caskets full of gems;
Of purple richer than their robes of state
And plumes and trappings when they go to mate;
Of gray that's soft as wing of turtle dove,
And crimson deeper than the lips we love;
We have beheld the falling of the rain,
On tender shoots that presage golden grain,
Renewing life with waters dearer bought
Than that far fountain Ponce de Leon sought,
For God has snatched the glory from his sky,
That we may have of bread our full supply.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

MAGIC OF PAIN

I BELIEVE, and I offer you proof,
Unbeliever, that never so far aloof,
Or deep in dust are they,
Who bound by mortal clay,
Loved the earth and its fruits,
Mankind and birds and brutes,
That they cannot come back again;
Learned in the magic of pain,
New-born in the sound of wings,
Or the touch on a wind-harp's strings,
Taught by the pain of death,
The magic of breath.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE LILY

DOES within your garden grow,
One white lily tall and fair,
Bending in her fragile grace,
With a pride so sweetly rare?

It is whispered that she guards,
Deep within her chalice white,
Secret of the power that brings,
Radiant morning after night.

Near a far-off hallowed shrine,
Grew a lily pale and cold,
And she filled her incense cup,
From that miracle of old.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE TEST

TIS said of a fetter of wondrous strength,
That the weakest link in its iron length,
Will break away though the others hold,
And the same is true when the links are gold.

A fetter of iron or gold or steel,
Will break apart like a silken reel,
If the thought, the desire and the conscious act,
The greatest strength of its maker lacked.

The man who scorns his Maker's thought,
When the world of weak and strong was wrought,
Nor does for love all his great strength can,
May lose the prize to the weaker man.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE MIRACLE

HOW small a mark our feet make on the earth,
How many in a tiny space can crowd,
And then, at last, how small a space we ask,
When tightly wrapped within our shroud.

And yet man's aims are wide as earth itself,
His thoughts are glorious, ample, free,
And take their form in deeds unmeasurable,—
How can so much within so little be!

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

ON MY WAY REJOICING

ON my way rejoicing,
Perhaps I'm going to work,
Perhaps I'm going to moon around
All day long and shirk.

On my way rejoicing,
There's so much to see,
There's so much to make me glad,
Please don't hurry me.

On my way rejoicing,
I can watch the flowers,
Lift their faces toward the sun,
While I'm wasting hours.

On my way rejoicing,
Perhaps I sometimes shirk,
But I have a chance to see,
Where the sunbeams lurk.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

On my way rejoicing,
Sun or gray or showers,
Perhaps it isn't wasting time,
To imitate the flowers.

On my way rejoicing,
Face turned toward the Sun,
Perhaps it won't much matter,
If I forget to run.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

AN OLD ROAD

HITHER and yon it wanders,
Through the record of the years,
Crossing the blotted pages
Of our by-gone hopes and fears.

Grown o'er with tangled flowers,
Scented with pine and rose,
Friend of the chattering chipmunk,
Accomplice of blushing beaux.

It narrows under the shade trees,
Widens at the spring,
Where the rusty tin cup dangles,
And ferns and mosses cling.

No matter how far the journey,
How long or how wild you roam,
It brings you at dusk contented,
To the wide-swinging gate of home.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

PURPLE AND PINK

THE grapes are ripe in the vineyard,
For the rulers in love's domain,
Pink and purple for passion,
Purple and pink for pain,
And the grapes are filled with juices,
For these riotous rulers twain,
Wines for the strength of passion,
Wines for the ease of pain.

The grapes are swelled to sweetness,
Where the sun has followed the rain,
Sweets for delighting passion,
Sweets for deadening pain,
And guests have been asked to the feasting,
Gifted with beauty and brain,
Beauty to play with passion,
And wit to cope with pain.

Their lips shall be red and glowing,
Their hair like the golden grain,
Red for quickening passion,

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

Gold for quieting pain,
Their bodies shall be the wine press,
Caught and bound and slain,
Wines for the strength of passion,
Wines for the ease of pain.

The grapes hang high in the vineyard,
Tempting the rulers twain,
Pink and purple for passion,
Purple and pink for pain,
Oh my Love, to prove possession,
'Tis thus the Fates ordain,
You must feast with passion,
And I must feast with pain.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE OLD 'UN

I MAINTAIN—

One hardly considers that I can do otherwise
The traditions of courtesy
Though many difficulties beset my way
As yesterday when a young person
Very flamboyant as to cheeks
White-tipped as to nose
And flaunting very, very strange garments
Stepped on the end of my stick
Which I was carrying in my right hand
And shifted thereupon to my left
The better to avoid such occurrence again
Then later in the street car
I gave my seat which I had secured only after a
tussle
To a cripple who sneered and kept his eyes
Fixed criptically on my stick
And I did not think until afterwards
That he rather expected I should strike him
Though probably not for his lack of courtesy.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

The creatures—

Variously male and female, weak and strong

Beautiful and ugly—

With whom one must come in contact as one gets
about

May have standards and opinions and positions of
sorts

But they leave one

Too out of breath

To want to pursue the matter

Too severely battered about

And shaken.

In the square

Where I take my seat about mid-forenoon

Under the tree that the birds favor

And not far from the fountain where the horses
drink

I can still imagine myself in contact with choice
spirits

They who established the very traditions

I maintain as best I may

And I rather like the manners of the birds and
beasts

Who frequent my haven.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

MY FRIENDS ARE MEN

MY friends are not the great or noble, rich or proud,
I find them rather in the surging crowd
Of workers, sufferers, where the sinners meet,
Who when they see me coming, always greet
Me not as alien, curious, anxious to reform,
Whose hearts, handclasp and words are warm,
Who know because they've felt, and knowing speak,
Who ask not if my blood is blue, what streak
May run across it, whence or why I came,
Nor do they mind if they may never know my name,
If but I come among them as a friend,
One of themselves, who if my fortunes mend,
Will show the way and share the good I've found;
Not those who by a vow, a threat, or heritage are bound,
Who came as children, joined the surging crowd,
Call each other men, and of just that are proud.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

WRECKS

A WRECK is a thing that rests at the edge
Of the shimmering sea and the shifting sand,
It rocked and moaned on the cruel ledge,
And went straight down within sight of the land,
Save for the worms that gnaw at its heart,
'Tis all forlorn, a thing apart,
There by the ebb and flow.

A wreck is a thing that warns me fair,
Of the hell of hate and the wrath of wrong,
Oh the shimmering sea doth beckon there,
And sweet is the call in the sea-maid's song,
Pray man with me, that our fate may be,
Not as that—on your bended knee—
There by the ebb and flow.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

AFRAID

I'M afraid—we're all so little,
Are we reckoned worth a tittle,
Midst the world's immensity?
Little home and little mother,
Little father, little brother,
Little friends and little me.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

BESS

I LOVE the country, yes
And pretty Bess
Who dimples, yet says nothing you'd remember
When cold gets here and drear December.

It takes a memory then to warm your heart
To action—that is why we part
And I clip off the wild wings
Nothing loth, and hie to other things.

A roving glance will find you in the crowd,
You smile, because you'd swear she bowed;
Ah yes, the country's charming, so is Bess,
I love them both, and both no less
Because I seek in beckoning city's ways
Something to crown the days.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

THE FLASK

THIS is the time when trees bear fruit,
Let tripping tongue give place to lute,
When full the board and foam on mug,
No real good fellow may be smug,
Nor mince the tale one deil's bit,
Best spill the brew than drown in it.

This is the time when goldenrod,
Touches to flame the cumbent sod,
No man may hide behind a moat,
Nor sell his birthright for a groat,
But look alive and mind the day,
When blood is red the deil's to pay.

A brew that's bottled up too tight,
Will burst its bounds some quiet night,
And all the world shall quake, alack!
But no man's wish shall bring it back,
'Tis well to brew and bottle up,
But better still to taste the cup.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

Mark well the worth of every hour,
Fruit of the tree and flame of flower,
Enough's all man i' faith may ask,
'Tis well i' sooth to share the flask,
And share your song and share your store,
So in good time there's space for more.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

FIZZ

POETS sing, chant, recite,
Poets write,
Using mechanical means to convey
Something they cannot stay,
Something, that catching fire,
Slithers along the wire.

What a strange thing a poet is!
When the green and gold stars and the fizz
Of his rocket's gone,
The poet's forlorn.

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

DOWN ALONG THE SOUTH SHORE

COME on, come on now with me,
Down along the South Shore,
Maybe you're afraid that you'll
Never come back any more,
That the charm will catch and hold
If you dare it, overbold,
But just try it, come on now,
Down along the South Shore.

That great sea that beckons us,
Down along the South Shore,
At our feet if we'll but halt,
Will a golden treasure pour;
Something it was given to keep—
Maybe you don't know how deep
Are its haunted silences,
Down along the South Shore.

It has heard the heart of things,
Down along the South Shore,
So it laughs sometimes and sings,

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

Echoing songs it's heard before,
So it sometimes moans and sobs,
If you'll listen to its throbs,
You'll hear every heart that beats,
Down along the South Shore.

Up those rocky, roughened slopes,
Down along the South Shore,
Birch and oak grow close together,
Fir and pine and many more
Grand and sturdy guardian trees,
Hardly bending to the breeze,
Even rout the hurricanes,
Down along the South Shore.

Thus it is perhaps the flowers,
Down along the South Shore,
Dare to grow so lavishly,
That the earth is like a floor
Covered with a carpeting
That might serve for any king,
So that we tread royally,
Down along the South Shore.

Sometimes looking toward the west,
Down along the South Shore,

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SHORE

From that long low line of hills,
It must seem that nothing more
Nothing better could be sought,
Than the wonder that is wrought,
Just by setting sun and clouds,
Down along the South Shore.

Folks are after all just folks,
Down along the South Shore,
Plain and proud, they're after all
Human, and they who foreswore
Creed and greed, and settled here,
Came as brothers, that's as near
As we need to come to right,
Down along the South Shore.

Life is living day by day,
Down along the South Shore,
Just as folks live everywhere,
Never knew a man who wore
Wings down here, or wanted to,
Child to man, that's how we grew,
So come on, let's foot it now,
Down along the South Shore.

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